

Message Text

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44

ACTION EA-14

INFO OCT-01 EUR-25 NEA-10 ISO-00 SSO-00 INRE-00 PM-07

NSC-10 SS-15 RSC-01 INR-10 PA-03 PRS-01 AID-20 DPW-01

IO-13 DRC-01 L-03 /135 W

----- 021907

O R 061140Z SEP 73

FM AMEMBASSY VIENTIANE

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 5707

INFO WHITE HOUSE

CIA

DIA

AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

AMEMBASSY CANBERRA

AMEMBASSY JAKARTA

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI

AMEMBASSY PHNOM PENH

AMEMBASSY SAIGON

AMEMBASSY WARSAW

CINCPAC

CINCUSARPAC

CINCPACAF

CINCPACFLT

DEPCHJUSMAGTHAI

CDR USSAG NKP

CDR 13 AF ADVON UDORN

USDEL JEC PARIS

SECDEF

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMCONSUL UDORN

USIA WASHDC

USDAO SAIGON

DIRNSA FT GG MEADE MD

COMUSMACTHAI

DODSPECREP BANGKOK

DODSPECREP NKP

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354 TFW KORAT

CHSPECACTS BANGKOK
CDR JCRC NKP
7 ACCS KORAT
432 TFW UDORN
8 TFW UBON
388 TFW KORAT
56 SOW NKP
ARMA/AIRA VTN LAOS
ARMA/AIRA SVKT LAOS

C O N F I D E N T I A L VIENTIANE 6174

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: MOPS, PGOV, PINS, PINT, PFOR, LA
SUBJECT: THE LAO CEASEFIRE - 28TH WEEK

13 AF ADVON, 432 TFW, 56 SOW, 388 TFW, 354 TFW AND 8 TFW
FOR DO/DI; MACTHAI FOR J-2 AND PAO;

CINCPAC ALSO FOR POLAD

REF: VIENTIANE 6033

I. POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS:

A. LIKE A WARM FRONT OPERATING BETWEEN TWO STAGNANT AIR
MASSES, SOUVANNA PHOUMA SPENT THE 28TH WEEK OF THE LAOS
CEASEFIRE TRYING TO GET THINGS MOVING AGAIN IN VIENTIANE.

B. SOUVANNA SOUGHT TO INJECT SOME MOVEMENT IN NEGOTIA-
TIONS BY THREATENING TO RESIGN IF HE COULD NOT RESOLVE
DIFFERENCES ON PROTOCOL. AT THE CABINET MEETING, AUGUST
30, A MAJORITY OF THE MINISTERS THEMSELVES REPORTEDLY
THREATENED TO RESIGN IF PRIME MINISTER INSISTED ON
SIGNING THE PROTOCOL.

C. ON AUGUST 31, LPF PLENIPOTENTIARY PHOUMI VONGVICHIT
RETURNED TO VIENTIANE AFTER NEARLY A WEEK IN LUANG PRABANG,
WHERE HE HAD MET WITH SOUVANNA AND HAD AN AUDIENCE WITH
THE KING. PHOUMI AND SOUVANNA MET AGAIN IN VIENTIANE ON
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SEPTEMBER 1 AND 3, WITH NO EVIDENT RESULTS, EXCEPT THAT
SOUVANNA REITERATED HIS INTENTION TO OFFER HIS RESIGNATION
SOON.

D. ON SEPTEMBER 4, PHOUMI ENGAGED IN HIS OWN SQUEEZE PLAY
WHEN HE HELD A NEWS CONFERENCE ATTACKING THE RIGHTISTS FOR
OBSTRUCTING THE SIGNING OF THE PROTOCOLS WHICH BOTH SIDES
HAD ALREADY AGREED UPON. ASSERTING THAT THE LPF HAD MADE

ALL THE CONCESSIONS EARLIER REQUESTED, PHOUMI SAID THE PROTOCOLS SHOULD BE SIGNED FORTHWITH WITHOUT ANY FURTHER MODIFICATIONS.

E. ON THE SAME DAY, SOUVANNA IS QUOTED BY ASAHI SHIMBUN CORRESPONDENT AS SAYING THE PROTOCOL HAD BEEN READY FOR SIGNATURE FOR WEEKS AND THAT THERE "IS NO LONGER ANY ROOM FOR ANY CHANGE" BY EITHER SIDE. HE REPORTEDLY ADDED THAT THERE WAS CONTINUING OPPOSITION TO CONCLUSION OF THE PEACE WITHIN HIS CABINET FROM 5 OF 8 OF HIS MINISTERS (INCLUDING SISOUK AND NGON SANANIKONE). REPORTEDLY, HE SAID IF PEACE BREAKS DOWN, RESPONSIBILITY WILL REST WITH THIS GROUP WITHIN THE CABINET.

F. NGON SANANIKONE, IN AN INTERVIEW WITH XAT LAO ON SEPTEMBER 5, DENIED THAT AGREEMENT BETWEEN THE TWO SIDES HAD BEEN REACHED ON AUGUST 14. WHILE EXPRESSING HIS ADMIRATION FOR SOUVANNA, HE ADMITTED OPPOSING A NUMBER OF POINTS IN THE DRAFT PROTOCOL.

G. MEANWHILE, THE SOVIET EMBASSY OFFERED ITS GOOD OFFICES TO BRING RLG AND LPF MILITARY LEADERS TOGETHER TO DISCUSS, CLARIFY AND, PERHAPS, RESOLVE SOME OF THE AMBIGUITIES AND POINTS PARTICULARLY BOTHERING THE FAR, SUCH AS MODALITIES OF NEUTRALIZING VIENTIANE AND ESTABLISHING POSITIONS OF OPPOSING FORCES. THIS OFFER PRIME MINISTER ACCEPTED, AND MEETING TOOK PLACE AT SOVIET EMBASSY SEPTEMBER 6.

H. COMMENT: CABINET MEETING SEPTEMBER 5 WAS APPARENTLY CALM AND NEITHER SOUVANNA NOR OTHER MEMBERS OF CABINET REITERATED RESIGNATION THREATS. OFFICIAL LAO PRESSE DID NOT EVEN REPORT THAT CABINET DISCUSSED NEGOTIATIONS. THUS, WHILE THE WEEK WAS GENERALLY OVERCAST BY POLITICAL CONFIDENTIAL

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THUNDERHEADS, SOUVANNA'S ASTUTE MOVES SEEMED TO HAVE DISSIPATED, AT LEAST TEMPORARILY, THE STORM CLOUDS.

II. MILITARY DEVELOPMENTS:

A. TWENTY-EIGHTH WEEK OF LAOS CEASEFIRE SAW LOWEST NUMBER OF MILITARY INCIDENTS SINCE FEBRUARY 21 CEASEFIRE WENT INTO EFFECT. FIVE MINOR CEASEFIRE INCIDENTS REPORTED, ALL IN SOUTHERN LAOS. ADDITIONAL TROOPS SENT TO VIENTIANE IN WAKE OF AUGUST 20 COUP ATTEMPT NOW TOTAL 465.

B. THERE ARE INDICATIONS THAT THERE WILL BE NUMBER OF SENIOR LEVEL PERSONNEL CHANGES WITHIN FAR. GENERAL THAO LY, PRESENT COMMANDING GENERAL SECOND STRIKE DIVISION, HAS BEEN APPOINTED FAR G-2. GENERAL ETAM SINGVONGSA, CURRENT

G-2, HAS BEEN NAMED TO NOW VACANT POSITION OF FAR DEPUTY
CHIEF OF STAFF HANDLING OPERATIONS AND INTELLIGENCE MATTERS.
GENERAL BANLANG, NOW DEPUTY COMMANDING GENERAL MR-III,
IS THE NEW DIRECTOR OF MILITARY SECURITY SERVICE. MOVES
SIGNIFICANT AS THEY REFLECT APPRECIATION OF NEED FOR BETTER
AND MORE RESPONSIVE INTELLIGENCE AND ENSURE STRONGER
COMMAND INFLUENCE ON SECURITY SERVICES.
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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: n/a
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 06 SEP 1973
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: garlanwa
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1973VIENTI06174
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS DEAN
Errors: N/A
Film Number: n/a
From: VIENTIANE
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1973/newtext/t19730950/aaaabkqs.tel
Line Count: 177
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE
Office: ACTION EA
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 4
Previous Channel Indicators:
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: VIENTIANE 6033
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: garlanwa
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 21 SEP 2001
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <21-Sep-2001 by elyme>; APPROVED <26-Nov-2001 by garlanwa>
Review Markings:

Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
30 JUN 2005

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: THE LAO CEASEFIRE - 28TH WEEK 13 AF ADVON, 432 TFW, 56 SOW, 388 TFW, 354 TFW AND 8 TFW
TAGS: MOPS, PGOV, PINS, PINT, PFOR, LA
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005